THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a)Yes Sir.

(b) The indo-German Consultative Group held its sixth annual meeting in New Delhi on November 1-2, 1997. The discussions identified inpediments to further cooperation between the two countries and suggested ways to overcome these. The Group also identified new initiatives to augment mutually beneficial exchanges. The issues discussed included promotion of trade and investment, Cooperation in the fields of science & technology with active industry involvement, education, culture and the media.

The Group also suggested the adoption by the two governments of an Indo-German Agenda 2000 and Beyond', consisting of specific measures to be pursued by the two countries in a medium and long term framework.

Political Appointments in Indian Missions Abroad

1729. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA:
DR. SHRIKANT RAMACHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of mission heads who are career diplomats and those who are political appointees out of all our missions abroad;

(b) what are the names of the political appointees and their missions;

(c) what is the reason for the gradual decline in the number of the political appointees over the years; and

(d) what steps would be taken to inject more dynamism and professionalism in our missions aborad?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) 93 Capitals have career diplomats heading the missions while there are 8 Missions with political appointees as their Heads.

(b) The following are the names of political appointees and their Missions (in alphabetical order of names of Capitals)

(1) Dr. Prabhakara Jha, Antananarivo
(2) Shri Salman Haidar, london
(3) Dr. Jaspal Singh, Maputo
(4) Shri L.C. Jain, pretoria
(5) Shri M.H. Ansari, Riyadh
(6) Shri Kushok Bakula, Ulan Bator
(7) Shri S.D. Muni, Vientiane
(8) Shri Naresh Chandra, Washington

(c) There has been no decline in the number of politically appointed Heads of Missions over the years.

(d) The overall performance of the Missions and the professionalism and dynamism of our officers serving abroad is a matter of continuous and ongoing evaluation within the Ministry. officers frequently undergo short term refresher and training courses to keep them up-to-date with the latest developments Wherever necessary, appropriate corrective measures are undertaken to maintain dynamism and professionalism in our Missions aborad.

Espionage by Satellite

1730. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that many satellites launched by the developed countries are engaged in espionage/surveillance activities on various countries;

(b) if so, whether any protest has been registered by Governments against threse activities;

(c) if so, when and the nature of protests registered; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Currently there is no international convention under which a country can prevent another country from collecting information from space over its territory. The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 provides for free access to space for all countries of the world for peaceful purposes. The Principles Related to Remote Sensing from Outer Space adopted by United Nations in 1986 also do not prohibit any country from making observations over other countries from space.

Stand on Nuclear Tests

1731. DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether our diplomats in missions abroad did a good job of explaining to the world our position with respect to the nuclear tests;

(b) if so, the details of the work done in this area;

(c) what are the salient features of our stand taken by the missions abroad; and

(d) what more steps would be taken in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Diplomats in our missions all over the world have explained the rationale underlying Government's decision to conduct the nuclear tests, to government and non-government sources. They are also sending back regular feed-back regarding the responses, as well as monitoring reports and coverage in the media.

(c) The salient features of our stand has been to explain our legitimate security concerns underlying the decision to authorise these nuclear tests; our reaffirmation that we are a responsible member of the international community and that our policies are marked by a high degree of restraint; we do not intend to use these weapons for aggression as these are weapons of self defence; we have no intention to engage in an arms race and, that we remain committed to a speedy process of global nuclear disarmament.

(d) Government has sent special envoys to several fora and meetings to explain our stand on the issue. In this respect, Government intends to continue to actively engage various countries both at the official and non official levels.

G-15 Summit

1732. SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Prime Minsiter decided not to attend the G-15 Summit in Cairo; and

(b) if so, what was the main agenda of this Summit and the reasons for not attending the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI, VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The G-15 Summit held in Cairo from May 11--13, 1998 focussed on two major themes, viz., (a) Developments in international financial markets; and (b) Developments in the Multilateral Trading System and enhancement of intra-G-15 cooperation on trade and investment. The issues of terrorism, biopiracy and South-South Cooperation were also on the agenda. The hon'ble Prime Minister could not personally attend the Summit owing to other pressing engagements in India. However, the high-level Indian delegation was led by the Hon'ble Vice-President of India.